

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
MARINE PROTECTED AREAS FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JUSTIFICATION FOR RENEWAL**

The Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPAFAC or Committee) was established in accordance with Executive Order 13158, dated May 26, 2000. The MPAFAC is currently operating under the authority given in Executive Order 13708, dated September 30, 2015. The MPAFAC is governed by provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), Public Law 92-463, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), which sets forth standards for the formation and use of advisory committees.

Accomplishments Under Current Charter.

Under this charter, the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (Committee) completed several recommendations to the Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Department of the Interior (DOI) on ways to strengthen the nation's system of marine protected areas (MPAs):

Completed Products

- Guiding Principles for Marine Protected Areas and MPA Networks in the Arctic (May 2016)

Expected by September 2016

Recommendations on:

- External Financing for U.S. Marine Protected Areas
- Enhancing Ecological Connectivity of U.S. Marine Protected Areas

The Committee met twice in person and twice via teleconference under the current charter, with key accomplishments noted below:

April 6, 2015: Via Conference Call/Webinar: The Committee met to review their charge, create Subcommittees and Working Groups to address the charge, and hear an update on how the Committee's recommendations have been used by the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior. The Subcommittees and Working Groups were created in concurrence with the Under Secretary of Commerce and Secretary of the Interior as required under the MPA FAC charter.

June 2-4, 2015: Tacoma, Washington: The Committee met to conduct Subcommittee work on ways to increase external finance support for U.S. MPA programs and enhancing ecological connectivity of U.S. MPAs. The meeting also featured a panel presentation and discussion on MPA issues in the Pacific Northwest, and a field visit to learn about tribal marine and coastal management issues.

November 9-10, 2015 – Arctic MPA Working Group: Anchorage, Alaska:

A working group of the MPA FAC, made up of 25 members representing diverse tribal and stakeholder interests, as well as federal agency representatives, met in person to

begin the development of “Guiding Principles” for MPAs and MPA networks in the U.S. Arctic. The working group meeting was open to the public, and held an extensive public comment period to receive input from Alaska Native representatives and others.

December 17, 2015: Via Conference Call/Webinar: The committee met to receive updates from the two Subcommittees (External Financing and Connectivity) and the Arctic MPA Working Group. The Arctic MPA Working Group provided a report on its in-person meeting.

May 24-26, 2016: Winter Harbor, Maine: The Committee met to finalize and approve recommendations on “Guiding Principles” for Arctic MPAs, and to continue work of the two Subcommittees. Subcommittees made significant progress on their recommendations, and developed timelines for the completion of their work by Summer 2016. Members also heard presentations from managers and partners at Acadia National Park, and a panel presentation on marine conservation issues in the Northeast. The Committee also held a discussion on potential issues for future focus by the Committee, which will be considered by the Department of Commerce and Department of the Interior in developing the new charge.

Shortly after this charter expires, ten members will complete their terms (November 15, 2016). The Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior are now in the process of planning for the recruitment of ten new members to be appointed in late 2016. Nine Federal agencies, as specified in the Charter, continued to participate as *ex officio* members of the Committee.

Need for Renewal

Renewal of the charter is essential to carry out Executive Order 13158, Marine Protected Areas. Section 4(c) of this Executive Order requires the establishment of an MPA Federal Advisory Committee to advise the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior on the implementation of the Executive Order, including the development of a National System of MPAs and MPA management.

The Committee is needed to represent the diverse interests of the public. MPAs are being used increasingly by Federal, State, and Territorial agencies as tools for coastal and marine resource management in the United States and internationally. Their use can be controversial since MPAs typically restrict the use of certain marine resources. The Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior are currently beginning to explore issues for the new charge to the MPA FAC. This list is intended to be flexible and evolving so the MPA FAC can assist with issues as they arise within the agencies.

Balanced Membership

The Committee consists of 20 voting members, appointed by the Under Secretary of Commerce in consultation with the designee of the Secretary of the Interior, selected in accordance with the Member Balance Plan. The Executive Order calls for a Committee of non-Federal scientists, resource managers, and other interested persons and organizations. In making its selection of members, a Department of Commerce and

Department of the Interior team recommends people from among a pool of candidates who represent a broad variety of MPA stakeholders in the public, private, university, non-governmental and non-Federal government sectors who live and work in the various coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes regions of the United States. These recommendations are reviewed by the Under Secretary of Commerce who appoints members. This balance shall be maintained to the degree feasible in the event of vacancies. An updated balance plan for the MPA FAC is attached.

Explanation of Change in Charter

Non-substantial changes are requested.

Other Factors

The Executive Order calls for the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior to seek the expert advice and recommendations of non-Federal scientists, resource managers, and other interested persons and organizations on matters pertaining to MPAs. The Committee concerns itself with all types of MPAs, including the conservation of biodiversity, fisheries, and submerged historic and cultural resources by all levels of government (Federal, State, territorial, tribal and local). The Committee's actions address the interests of both the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior, as well as the interests of stakeholders potentially affected by these programs and activities. No Departmental program, existing advisory committee, or Federal agency has the mandate to address all of these requirements.

Estimated Target Date for Completion of Committee's Function

The work of the Committee will be ongoing in order to fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in Section 4 of Executive Order 13158 of May 26, 2000.